

# SCIAF factsheets

## disasters...

### What is a disaster?

A disaster is often sudden. It causes great damage, destruction and human suffering.

### For example?

- hurricanes
- droughts
- floods
- earthquakes
- cyclones
- volcanoes

### It's not fair

In emergencies it is people who already live in poverty who suffer most because:

- They are very vulnerable to start with. For example, their houses are not built of the best quality materials.
- They may live on steep hillsides prone to landslides or riverbanks prone to flooding because they cannot afford good land.
- They have nothing to fall back on. For example, if they lose their crops because of drought they can't afford to buy food.

Deadly disasters 1990-2000			
Year	Location	Death toll	Disaster
1990	Iran	36,000	Earthquake
1991	Bangladesh	140,000	Cyclone
1995	Japan	6,300	Earthquake
1996	China	531	Landslide
1997	Montserrat	32	Volcano
1998	Central America	10,000	Hurricane
1999	Turkey	16,000	Earthquake
2000	Mozambique	650	Floods

### TRY THIS:

- Hold a class debate on:
- It is more important to reduce poverty around the world than to raise money for disaster relief."
- List at least three ways you could help bring about a more just and equal world.

### TRY THIS:

- Click on to the [disasterrelief.org](http://disasterrelief.org) website and find out what disasters occurred where last year.
- Find out what causes earthquakes and droughts.

### FACT FILE:

"While earthquakes and floods capture headlines, the uncontrolled spread of infectious disease takes most lives. The death toll for infectious diseases (such as AIDS, malaria, respiratory diseases and diarrhoea) is 160 times greater than the number killed in last year's disasters."

### World Disaster Report 2000

### FACT FILE:

- About 95 per cent of deaths caused by disasters occur in poor countries.
- A disaster of a similar nature and size causes more deaths in poor countries than in rich ones.
- In richer countries the costs of rebuilding after a disaster are high, but there is always money and enough technology for reconstruction.
- In poor countries the costs may be lower but finding the money is much more difficult. Therefore disaster has a far greater impact on poor countries.

### Disaster Relief

### SCIAF is there in a crisis... and beyond

SCIAF uses its global network of partner organisations to respond to disasters wherever they occur. In the

past few years SCIAF has responded to every major disaster including the famines in North Korea & Afghanistan and the floods in Papua New Guinea and Mozambique.

In emergencies SCIAF provides essential supplies such as blankets and food. But the work doesn't finish there - SCIAF provides help to families and communities many years afterwards to help them rebuild their shattered lives.

**Danger!**

After a disaster disease spreads quickly if there is no clean water and no toilets.

**TRY THIS:**

- Find out what sort of diseases can spread when there is no clean water.

**What does SCIAF do?**

**1. Immediately**

When there is a disaster SCIAF launches a special emergency appeal to ask people in Scotland for donations.

This money helps SCIAF provide food, clothing, medicines, shelter and clean water. At this early stage the priority is saving people's lives.

After Hurricane Mitch in Central America people in the area needed food packages, cooking stoves, clean water, medicines, sanitation (toilets) and hygiene supplies (e.g. soap).

In August 1999 one of the worst earthquakes ever recorded hit north-east Turkey. Here people needed strong tents and wooden houses as well as food, clean water and medicine.

**TRY THIS:**

- Work out how much money a family of four needs each day to live on in Britain.
- Make a week's "money" diary showing how much you spend every day for a week.

**TRY THIS:**

- Can you think of at least one disaster/emergency that happened in the UK in the last year? What was it? Who was involved in the rescue operation and how?
- What would you need if a natural disaster like a flood or an earthquake hit your town or village? What would you need most the first day, after one week, one year later?

**2. Long-term response**

SCIAF works in partnership with local people and organisations, helping communities to rebuild and start again.

- In Rwanda, SCIAF is providing help to children orphaned by the war, which claimed over 1 million lives.
- In Mozambique, after the massive floods, SCIAF provided grants to buy building materials for new houses to be built on higher ground.
- Mozambique is one of the poorest countries in the world with more than 90 per cent of its people living on less than US\$1 (about 60p) a day. Mozambique would be more able to cope if it wasn't paying US\$1.4 million a week in debt repayments. SCIAF campaigns to have poor countries' debts reduced or cancelled.

- Disaster Relief  
<http://www.disaster-relief.org>
- Red Cross  
<http://www.redcross.org.uk>
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies  
<http://www.ifrc.org>
- World Health Organisation  
<http://www.WHO.org>
- United Nations  
<http://UN.org>
- Reliefweb International  
<http://reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf>
- Alertnet  
<http://alertnet.org>
- CAFOD  
<http://www.cafod.org.uk>
- Trocaire  
<http://www.trocaire.ie>

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